

SUMMARY
OF
CONFERENCE CRITIQUES

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From the Fifth Annual Conference
of Records Management Officers

1. Available in the Records Administration Branch, SSS, DDS, are 56 critiques from the 2-3 December 1971 conference of about 90 Agency Records Management Officers and administrative personnel.

a. All but one from a DDI participant, are enthusiastic about the Conference and the use of Panels. They say the Conference was excellent and feel it only needs the Panels, a Keynote speaker, and an announcement or two on the Records Program. It should omit most other speakers. The dissident comment questioned the need for the conference [redacted] suggesting Headquarters instead, and said the "Panels did not enlighten." "They were not original in presenting anything new."

b. The critiques are very outspoken about preferring the opportunity to participate rather than listening to speakers. (In 1968 the RMO Conference used panels to study records micro-filming problems, while the other three RMO Conferences used speakers, movies, and instructors on ADP and Records Program problems).

c. The Conferees liked Mr. Wattles and [redacted] of DDI but were disappointed with [redacted] of Finance (dry monotone). Several enthused over [redacted]'s talk on microfilming. They also want to continue the 2-day conference (in October not December) [redacted] and want a half-day gathering at Headquarters in the Spring with other brief Directorate meetings in between. They want more time at the Conference for Panels and the Records Board.

d. Many comments emphasize personal interests and contradict each other. These should prove to be challenges for future planners:

Have larger panels versus have smaller panels;
Too much emphasis on records destruction versus more disposal is needed;
Give more DDP information versus DDP not of general interest;
Have Panels of same Directorate people versus get cross fertilization, meeting of others, and exchange of ideas in mixed Panels;
Have more subjects to cover versus not too many subjects;
Some want more communication, guidance, and announcements versus take less time at the microphone;
Administrators and non-records types found it partially applicable versus fully applicable, timely, realistic, etc;
Excellent Conference, well planned and administered versus panels disorganized, more floor time for questions.

e. Several indicated the need for more top management support of the Records Program. Using such terms as:

We have an "authority gap" for Records Program implementation;
Other duties have higher priority than Records Management;
Get Office heads to allow RMO more time to do records work.
Effectiveness of Conference depends on management response.
Records Program is hard to implement without full-time RMO.

2. Discussions since the Conference among the staff and Records Officers have surfaced these additional informal reactions:

- a. The best Conference to date.
- b. Need more Panel discussions on more problems more often.
- c. Gotten better understanding of Retention Plans.
- d. Greater cooperation and action by RMO's since Conference.
- e. Microfilm talk was well received and more are requested.
- f. Conference and Panels were educational for non-record types.
- g. Some informal agreements and plans were consummated at Conference.
- h. Established new meetings for Retention Plan work.
- i. New ideas for file screening and for records.

3. The comments in the Critiques included several that can and will be implemented by the Agency Records Staff. Others comments plus the recommendations by the Panels will be considered by the Records Management Board for office or Directorate actions and where appropriate will be submitted to management for consideration. Some proposals are being practiced in some areas and these conference recommendations will simplify getting them into practice Agency-wide. The Panel proposals will be part of a separate formal report.

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CIA Records Administration Officer